



Procurement Modernization Team “Newsflash”

PMT Information Technology Transfer Newsletter

15 April, 1998

Vol. 1 Issue No. 4

What's New.....PMT

“In order to serve you better.....We are providing a Newsletter that we hope you will find informative, interesting and rewarding.”

PMT Hold PCMS Conference

The PMT Program Manager, Sue Poetz, convened a conference, on February 17th and 18th, to discuss Purchase Card Management System (PCMS) technical and training issues as well as deployment strategies. The conference was attended by National Finance Center (NFC), Forest Service (FS), Agriculture Research Service (ARS), USBank and members of the Procurement Modernization Team (PMT). The conference covered issues such as PCMS technical requirements, security (SAMS), enhancements and upgrades; PCMS training efforts to include changes in training delivery and scheduling and PCMS deployment strategies. The conference was well received by all attendees and issues discussed were documented for resolution.

The Basics.....About PMT's Discoverer 2000 Data Query Tool.

The Procurement Modernization Team (PMT) along with the USDA Procurement Users Group have

acquired and begun implementation of the Discoverer 2000 data query tool. The Discoverer 2000 data query tool is used to query information from existing and future databases and build reports from those databases. To use this tool, you do not need to have experience in computer programming or knowledge in the structure of a database. However, the user friendly pull down menus and pop-lists available within the query tool allows you to create reports to suit specific requirements.

Presently, USDA is using the data query tool against the Federal Procurement Data/SF279/SF281 system; the new and upcoming Purchase Card Management System, and in future the Warrant Tracking System which is under development. Presently, 80% of USDA agencies are using this data query tool at the National Office level. OPPM will shortly be requesting field deployment plans and schedules from USDA agencies.

It should be noted that The National Finance Center (NFC) will be using the data query tool with their utilities (VTVN) system.

Last November, the PMT held a two day “train the trainer” in which select agency personnel were trained in the query tool use and how to conduct data query tool training sessions. During the training, there was an over whelming positive response to the ease of using the tool.



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For additional information on the data tool or its training, please feel free to call Maurice Thompson at 202.720.3037 or you can reach him via e-mail at mthompson@usda.gov.

PMT Acquisition Toolkit on the Way.

Its here! Phases 1 and 2 of the *USDA Acquisition Toolkit* are on the Internet. Full implementation will give users and customers a central location to access all Internet sites of interest to USDA procurement personnel. The Toolkit now includes one click access to:

~Wage Determinations

Davis-Bacon - construction contracts of \$2,000 or more
Service Contract of \$2,500 or more.

~Synopsis

(CBD-Net link for synopsis requests/status)

~Potential Sources

(SBA-ProNet link for mailing lists, market research)

~Supplies

(GSA Advantage link for common supply items)

~Past Performance

(NIH Contractor Performance System)

~Links

(non-USDA acquisition web sites)

Your agency has a designated contact for the Toolkit and comments/questions/suggestions can also be emailed to Toolkit@usda.gov.

Phase 3 will include –

~Purchase Card

(Web enabled version of Purchase Card Management System reconciliation)

~Reports

(Web enabled version of Data query tool for administrative reports)

The phase 3 tools will provide the opportunity for significantly streamlining the micro purchase reconciliation process, and provide managers with information to better manage their programs. Please, visit the USDA Procurement Home Page at <http://www.usda.gov/da/procure.html> and then click on the Toolkit icon. Make sure you mark it as one of your favorites and stay informed as to what's happening in USDA and Government procurement.



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PMT Member Spotlight



“Every month, the PMT newsletter will Spotlight a member of the Procurement Modernization Team.”

Linda M. Persons, PMT Policy Team Leader.

As the Policy Team Leader for the Procurement Modernization Team, Ms. Persons is responsible for researching, analyzing, and evaluating recommendations proposed in the ***Business Case for USDA Procurement Modernization***. Her Federal contracting career started as an intern at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (AFB) in Dayton, Ohio. She later moved on to work with a distinguished group of individuals on the Air Force Contracts Review Committee. There she assisted in the review of contracts over \$5M and requests for Indemnification of Unusually Hazardous Risk within the HQ Air Force Logistics Command.

During the early part of 1982, Ms. Persons moved to Alexandria, VA and worked at Andrews AFB in Camp Springs, MD. From 1982 to 1984, Ms. Persons was lead contract specialist on major computer systems purchases for the Pentagon’s Air

Force Data Service Center and the Air Force Computer Acquisition Center at Hanscom AFB, Boston, MA.

In January 1985, Ms. Persons accepted a job with USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), in Alexandria, VA. Ms. Persons awarded several contracts in support of the various Nutrition Programs. However, her major accomplishment during her tenure at FNS was as the Contracting Officer for the Computer Hardware Acquisition Modernization Program (CHAMP). CHAMP was FNS’ first agency wide indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract that allowed managers to put computers on each employee’s workstation.

Ms. Persons accepted her present position as Procurement Analyst with the Departmental Administration in March 1989. During that time, she has been honored for outstanding work in the implementation of the Procurement Integrity Act and training of USDA Procurement Officials; issuance of Departmental Regulations and guidelines; and participation in interagency task forces (OMB’s SWAT Team, Task Order Contracting, Debarment and Suspension Taskforce, Interagency Procurement Career Management Subcommittee, USDA Value Engineering Task Force, etc.).

Ms. Persons is presently the individual responsible for implementing the Acquisition Workforce Provisions of the Federal Acquisition Reform Act.



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As such, Ms. Persons strongly believes in establishing, maintaining, and retaining a professional acquisition workforce within USDA. She has two professional designations -- one as a **Professional Contract Manager** from the Air Force Institute of Technology and the other as a **Certified Professional Contracts Manager(CPCM)** with the National Contract Management Association (NCMA). She is a member of the Washington Chapter of the NCMA, and the National Association of Black Procurement Professionals.

Ms. Persons attended Kentucky State University and has a B.S. in Business Administration from Wright State University. She also completed graduate work at the University of Dayton and currently holds a M.S. in Contract and Acquisition Management from the Florida Institute of Technology.

Spotlight on Agency Partnership

“From time to time, the PMT newsletter will Spotlight Agencies or Offices that are teaming with PMT to implement the future PMT system and initiatives.”

“Stay tuned.....”

Trends, Ideas, and Latest & Greatest

“To keep our team members up to date.....We are introducing a section in which to spotlight new ideas, business concepts and trends.....”.

Charge Cards Get Smart.

By Brian Friel. Government Executive Magazine, February 24, 1998.

Officials from the Defense Department, the Office of Management and Budget and the General Services Administration gathered Monday in Washington to celebrate new government wide charge card contracts, which they touted as the largest charge-card procurement ever. GSA estimates that federal employees will use the purchase, fleet and travel cards to pay for \$100 billion in expenses in the next 10 years.

The officials said the new deal would cut agencies' administrative costs and make it faster and easier to pay for small purchases and travel expenses. In addition, they predicted that the new contracts, under which six companies will compete to provide card services, will eventually allow federal employees to use single "smart cards" for all their purchase, fleet, and travel expenses, and for identification, access to



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secure buildings, and other purposes.

"This is a form of the ultimate democratization of the acquisition process," said Deputy Defense Secretary John Hamre. "We don't need the expertise it takes to buy an aircraft carrier when you buy a ream of paper. We've treated this like only a cadre of appointed priests are able to do this."

OMB Deputy Director G. Edward DeSeve called on managers to streamline the procurement process before giving employees charge cards.

"We can't give them a card and then have seven levels of approval," DeSeve warned. "This procurement requires creativity to reengineer the back-room office."

Under the new contracts, federal agencies will choose from six companies for charge-card services: American Express, Citibank, First National Bank of Chicago, Mellon Bank, NationsBank and US Bank. Agencies can choose one contractor for purchase, fleet and travel cards, or mix-and-match card providers

For more on this article, please set your browser to the following URL address:

www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0298/022498b1.htm.

Newsletter Editor's Note: USDA participated in the source selection process of the six companies that

will provide the services mentioned above. In particular, Joe Taylor (APHIS-PMT), Joanne Garrison (OPPM) and Mary Andrasco (USDA-OCFO) participated on the source selection team.

In and Around the Procurement World.....



"We introduce this section in order to keep our team members informed on what is happening in and around the Government and Private Sector Procurement World.....".

Selling Cultural Change. Contracting Officers are encouraged to take prudent risk.

Change Culture. Government Executive Magazine, February 24, 1998.

Of the most challenging tasks of procurement reform has been changing the mind-set of federal contracting officers, program managers, their customers and vendors. Decades of oversight by inspector generals and Congress have quashed some of the desire to be innovative. Many in the procurement community are hesitant to try new acquisition methods for fear of penalties, award protests and-worst of all-prison.



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In an attempt to encourage contracting officers to take prudent risks, Vice President Gore has been handing out Hammer Awards to agencies who try new acquisition methods. In addition, the National Performance Review has created more than 40 procurement reinvention labs responsible for finding better ways for the government to acquire goods.

"An interest in changing has been present in the culture but not acted on because procurement people on the front lines thought they didn't have management support," says former Office of Federal Procurement Policy Administrator Steven Kelman, who has spent a lot of time traveling to federal buying offices in an effort to empower members of the procurement community to take risks. "People have been waiting for a signal from above that it was OK to try new things-and we have been trying to give them that signal."

Contracting officers are learning to manage risk by carefully defining expectations and organizing the right relationships between agencies and contractors. They are relying on common-sense solutions that provide flexibility and eliminate fear of reprisal.

For more on this article, please set your browser to the following URL address:

www.govexec.com/procure/articles/0296fag2.htm.

“Conferences, Symposiums & Seminars.....Calendar”

Stay tuned with the latest in acquisition issues, methodologies, lectures and seminars at the Defense Acquisition University which can be found at the following web page address:

<http://www.acq.osd.mil/dau/>.

What's in Store in April.....

27-29 Internet and Electronic Commerce Conference and Exhibition. Conference. New York. Provided by Expocon Management Associates, Inc. For more information call 203.256.4700.

“Feed-back”

In order to keep this newsletter current, please give us feed back. Suggestions, comments and ideas can be submitted to A. Andrew Anderson @ 202.690.1048 or Andrew.Anderson@usda.gov.